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SUBJECT: KOSOVO -- GUIDANCE FOR UNSC MEETING ON JUNE 20

¶1. (U) The Department requests that USUN draw on the following points in making our statement during the June 20, 2008, UN Security Council session to discuss the recent report by UN SYG Ban Ki-moon regarding the reconfiguration of the UN presence in Kosovo.

¶2. Begin Points

-- The United States welcomes the report of the Secretary General on the reconfiguration of the UN presence in Kosovo. The issue at stake is whether the UN presence in Kosovo should remain static or should rather adapt and respond appropriately to recent events.

-- In response to the Secretary-General's report, I would like to make four points.

-- First, the United States supports in principle the Secretary-General's initiative to reconfigure the UN presence in Kosovo.

-- The Secretary-General's report to this Council rightly notes that the UN must adapt to the evolving situation on the ground. This conclusion is neither new nor radical. As far back as 2005, then UN Envoy Kai Eide reported that the UN's leverage in Kosovo was declining and that new international actors, particularly the EU, would need to play a leading international role.

-- The UN administered Kosovo for nine years, much longer than anyone imagined when the Council adopted resolution 1244 in June 1999. As the years have passed, the UN Secretary-General has continually adjusted the UN presence in Kosovo and its relationship to other international organizations. The fact that Kosovo's democratic, multi-ethnic government is now ready to govern is a testament to the UN's success in institution-building.

-- The Secretary General's continued cooperation with other international organizations, particularly the European Union, will ensure that there is appropriate oversight by the international community and that Kosovo continues its progress in building a more stable society.

-- My second point today is that the United States finds certain elements in the Secretary-General's report to be troubling.

-- The Secretary General has proposed a new round of UN dialogue with Belgrade to discuss institutional arrangements within the state of Kosovo. We believe that such dialogue should always be encouraged, particularly if UN officials can facilitate the government in Belgrade's support of multi-ethnic institutions in Kosovo.

Nevertheless, any institutional arrangements for Kosovo must be discussed with and agreed to by the government in Pristina.

-- This dialogue must be transparent regarding both its agenda and objectives and must be thoroughly coordinated with the major international stakeholders who will assume responsibility for security and stability in Kosovo.

-- I also note with concern language in the Secretary General's report that could be construed as proposing a more robust and long-term UN role in Kosovo than is warranted. Our view is that the Secretary General should have acknowledged more explicitly that the UN can no longer play such a major role in Kosovo under the present circumstances.

-- Third, I would note that the Council should be encouraged by the rapid progress Kosovo has achieved since independence -- this progress justifies the Secretary General's decision to reconfigure the UN presence.

-- We are pleased to see that Kosovo's transition to independence has gone more smoothly than many had expected. Kosovo's multi-ethnic government -- which includes Kosovo Serbs, Turks, Bosniaks and Roma -- has enthusiastically begun to implement the minority rights framework proposed by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. The Kosovo Assembly has adopted key laws to implement the Ahtisaari Plan in areas such as decentralization of local government, protection of cultural heritage and the rights of ethnic communities and their members. Kosovo's new constitution meets the highest international human rights standards and incorporates rights protections contemplated in the Ahtisaari Plan. Nevertheless, serious problems remain and Kosovo has much work to do to fight corruption, implement market reforms, and build better institutions. But the political maturity its leaders have shown, particularly through their words and actions to reach out to Kosovo's minorities, suggests Kosovo has a bright future.

-- My fourth and final point is that Belgrade's efforts to promote ethnic separation in Kosovo threaten to reverse the progress the UN and the people of Kosovo have achieved.

-- The Secretary General's report correctly notes that Belgrade will continue to have a relationship with Kosovo Serbs. Indeed, even the Ahtisaari Plan provided for this relationship to continue and proposed transparent mechanisms for Belgrade to support Kosovo Serb communities. But Belgrade has recently decided to use this relationship to discourage Kosovo Serbs from cooperating or even talking with their Kosovo Albanian neighbors. On March 22, Serbia's Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic (sah-MAR-jitch) publicly characterized Belgrade's plan as the "functional division of Serbs and Kosovo Albanians" in Kosovo. To implement this plan, Belgrade sponsored parallel municipal elections in Kosovo, which the UN correctly declared illegal and contrary to Security Council resolution 1244. Belgrade also and pressured Serbs to withdraw from Kosovo's multi-ethnic institutions that were established under UN auspices. Belgrade is now supporting a Serb parliamentary assembly in Kosovo, an attempt to solidify parallel institutions. Belgrade has also reinforced its control over northern Kosovo, where Serb-instigated violence resulted in the death of a UN police officer in March.

-- Such policies of ethnic partition and separation run contrary to the principles of the UN Charter and threaten to undermine nine years of international community efforts to promote multi-ethnic governance in Kosovo. The United States has long believed that Serbia, a great nation and regional leader, has a bright and prosperous future in Euro-Atlantic institutions. We therefore encourage Belgrade's new government to encourage Kosovo Serbs to

participate in multi-ethnic institutions in Kosovo.

-- In conclusion, Kosovo seems to be moving in the right direction, especially when compared to many of the troubled regions of the world that demand the Council's attention. As the period of UN administration over Kosovo comes to a close, we look forward to working with the Secretary General to protect the UN's positive legacy in Kosovo of peace and democracy.

End Points

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